

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DEAE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 IO-13
JUSE-00 NSAE-00 CTME-00 SNM-05 TRSE-00 ICA-11
NSC-05 OES-09 OMB-01 CG-00 DOTE-00 L-03 PPT-01
CA-01 SS-15 DODE-00 AID-05 /094 W
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R 282134Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9783

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BOGOTA 8188

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SNAR CO
SUBJECT: USCG EFFORTS TO SUPPRESS DRUG TRAFFICKING

REF: A. STATE 201357, B. STATE 128500, C. BOGOTA 3638
D. BOGOTA 8090

1. RE PARA 3 REF A, THE BASIC INSTRUCTION FOR AN APPROACH TO THE GOC (REF. B) WAS RECEIVED NOT LONG AFTER THE MISSION'S EXPERIENCE IN THE CASE OF THE M/V JACQUELINE (REF.C). IN THAT CASE, THE DECISION TO DENY THE U.S. AD HOC REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO BOARD THE COLOMBIAN FLAG VESSEL ON THE HIGH SEAS WAS MADE PERSONALLY BY THE FOREIGN MINISTER. THE CATEGORIC DENIAL AT THAT LEVEL, PARTICULARLY WITH THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND A NEW ADMINISTRATION PENDING, MADE FURTHER APPROACHES TO THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AT THAT TIME FUTILE.

2. THE IDEA OF U.S. OFFICIALS BEING GRANTED PERMISSION TO BOARD COLOMBIAN VESSELS HAS RECEIVED NEGATIVE REACTION FROM OTHER GOC OFFICIALS WITH WHOM THE SUBJECT HAS BEEN BROACHED. IT IS GENERALLY REGARDED AS IMPERMISSABLE FROM THE STANDPOINT OF NATIONAL SOVERIGNTY AND PRIDE.

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3. IN THE CASE OF THE JACQUELINE, THE MISSION ALSO APPROACHED ATTORNEY GENERAL SERRANO WHO HAS BEEN NOTED FOR HIS INNOVATIVE COOPERATION WITH THE MISSION IN NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT MATTERS. AT THAT TIME AND UPON SUBSEQUENT OCCAISIONS, HE POINTED OUT THAT IT WAS NOT POLITICALLY AND LEGALLY FEASIBLE FOR THE GOC TO GRANT PERMISSION FOR THE

U.S. TO BOARD COLOMBIAN REGISTERED VESSELS ON AN AD HOC BASIS. THE SUBJECT AROSE AGAIN WITH THE ATTORNEY GENERAL IN A MEETING WITH THE AMBASSADOR ON AUGUST 11. SERRANO AT THAT TIME SUGGESTED THE ONLY SOLUTION WOULD BE A BILATERAL AGREEMENT SETTING UP PROCEDURES THAT WOULD AVOID ANY APPEARANCE OF INTERFERENCE IN COLOMBIAN INTERNAL AFFAIRS.

4. THE EMBASSY SHARES THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S VIEW AND BELIEVES THAT NOW-- WITH THE NEW COLOMBIAN ADMINISTRATION PUBLICLY COMMITTED TO A STRONG NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT GETTING UNDER WAY--IS THE TIME TO APPROACH THE GOC REGARDING SUGGESTED AGREEMENT. FURTHER AD HOC APPROACHES OR ATTEMPTS AT AN INTERIM ARRANGEMENT ARE LIKELY TO BE COUNTER PRODUCTIVE. ACCORDINGLY, THE EMBASSY REQUESTS THAT IT BE SUPPLIED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE WITH A U.S. DRAFT AGREEMENT WITH AN OFFICIAL SPANISH TRANSLATION. THE EMBASSY WOULD THEN CONSULT WITH THE GOC TO REACH BASIC AGREEMENT BEFORE FORMAL NEGOTIATIONS BEGAN.
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